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FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR:

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Please tell Mr. Bowie that, in accordance with established form, we have made no lateral distribution of this paper. Should he wish Bruce Clarke to have it at this time, the Panel would be glad for a copy to be sent to him.

W.L.

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called 20 Apr to let us know he passed a copy to Bruce Clarke.

Date 18 April 1979

101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

NFAC 1981-79

18 April 1979

Memorandum for Dr. Bowie

Subject: Senior Review Panel: Talking Points on
the NIE/IIM Process and the Role of the
Review Panel

1. This memorandum responds to your request for suggestions on the NIE/IIM process, in Talking Points form, which might serve as a basis for a more extended discussion with NIOs/Office Directors. These are at Attachment 1. They necessarily derive from a Panel experience which has strengthened its view that process and procedures are not ends in themselves but subordinates, or facilitators, of substance and production quality.

2. The Points embody the main lines of previous discussions with you. They are not intended to outline a set of standard operating procedures. Their aim is to invite NIO/Office Director attention to the substantive aspects of process as a function of the improvement of quality and the enforcement of acceptable standards. Where they suggest specific procedural solutions, they address persisting problems which the Panel continues to identify in its review of current production. Among the more significant of these are:

(a) need to distinguish between concept papers and terms of reference--to elicit understanding of the preparatory work which should attend the former--and to clarify the relationship between the two. (At present, agreed practice or consensus is virtually nonexistent. Some fresh reminders may be in order.)

(b) misunderstanding of the distinction between NIEs and IIMs which holds that the principal difference is not NFIB action--nor even the subject matter addressed--but the claim that only NIEs/SNIEs are intended to be estimative and forward-looking while IIMs are analytical and recapitulative.

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Review Panel

(c) the different production phases in which you expect the Panel to be sufficiently involved to advise you of its views or reactions. (At present, most concept papers and some terms of reference are sent to the Panel; many of the latter are not. Some initial and some intermediate drafts, some internally-coordinated NFAC versions, some NFIB-representatives' re-editions reach us; others--at one or more of these stages--do not. These variations frustrate an orderly review process and are needlessly burdensome, and often quite time-consuming, for your Office.)

(d) provision for adequate time for your approvals, and our review, unencumbered by tight, self-inflicted NFIB deadlines. (At present, more often than not, you and we have a single, unsatisfactory last-minute choice: a rapid scan, productive of quick and superficial judgment; or a disruptive intervention to delay scheduled timings or re-open a community-agreed paper.)

3. We understand that Bruce Clarke is developing a set of overall production procedures, and he has kindly kept us well informed of his progress. We are sending these Talking Point reflections on process, in a more substantive sense, to you now in the thought that you might wish to have them for consideration or discussion at a time when specific production procedures are under review.

4. You also requested that we send you a checklist of additional procedural questions that may require resolution in the future. These are at Attachment 2.

5. We should be very pleased to discuss these matters with you.



William Leonhart

Attachments:
As stated

Talking Points

1. As you know, I have asked Bruce Clarke to review our production schedules and recommend to me any changes he believes desirable in our procedures. He is now consulting with you, and at this stage of your discussions I have thought you might find it useful to have a general sense of my own views of what constitutes an appropriate process, of the particular points at which I think it is indispensable for the Office of the Director to be involved, and of the role I have asked the Review Panel to take in our efforts to improve the usefulness of NIEs and IIMs to senior policymakers.

2. First, I suppose I should go over with you again the nature of a good NIE/IIM. This, as I have said before, is less a matter of definition than of clarity about what a policymaker wants and needs. (If you wish formal definitions, the old USIB in 1975 developed a set which are still in effect. If you have not read them recently, can get you copies.) But if you look at the problem from the standpoint of the policymaking consumer, you will find that he wants papers which are timely, analytical and estimative.

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Timeliness means that we must look for ways to shorten our drafting and coordination processes and to adhere more strictly to the completion times we ourselves stipulate. Analytical quality means that the papers move directly into the subjects at issue and stay there--avoiding or minimizing historical, descriptive, general background, or fact-book materials. Estimative means that the papers look ahead--as far as the state of our information or reasonable inference permits. Estimative also means that the papers should be designed to identify and clarify alternative developments and to illuminate, where appropriate, policy issues and options--the "What Ifs" on which a US policymaker rightly expects intelligence support. There should be no substantial difference between an NIE and an IIM in these qualities.

3. The procedures you are discussing should, I think, be viewed as parts of an entire process. And the process should take into account a number of problems we are currently encountering. For example, current practice holds that any NFIB member--indeed any policymaker of the rank of Assistant Secretary or above--may request an NIE/IIM. I believe this too liberal a rule. The production burden falls largely on NFAC, and we must satisfy ourselves that the proposal in

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question is within our capacities, is of broadly national interest, and is capable of being met without serious disruption of our established production schedules--or if dislocations are inevitable, that there is agreement on how production priorities and the use of scarce resources are to be rearranged.

4. When we have reached agreement on these matters, a concept paper should be prepared and sent to me for approval. The draft concept should be sent at the same time to the Review Panel whom I have asked to advise me on concept quality. Except for SNIEs where we must develop accelerated procedures, I would expect to give you my approval, or reactions, within a week. As I have indicated to you before, the concept should clarify why the proposed paper should be written and what the main questions are with which it will deal. It need be no longer than a few paragraphs--one page should more than suffice. But it is not a casual document. It should normally be, not a solitary excursion, but the product of searching discussions within NFAC and with outside consultants and experts. It should represent a thorough preliminary canvass of the subject. Terms of reference derive from the concept and should not be undertaken or circulated before the concept paper has been approved.

5. Generally, I think, terms of reference should be prepared by the NIO and principal drafter in close consultation. They should be detailed, analytical, and designed, in carrying out the approved concept, to focus on the estimative process. They should be sent to me and to the Review Panel, which again will give me its advice and comments. Only after the terms of reference have been approved, should they be forwarded to other participating NFIB agencies for their coordination. I would like each NIO to consider whether the draft terms of reference should ^{accompanied by} not also be/a statement proposing the production resources the paper will require, nominating any consultants desired, and outlining a feasible work schedule. It is not too late at this point to withdraw from, or postpone, a paper--if our production program or limited resources require. But beyond this point we should schedule the paper with NFIB and adhere to our commitment.

6. The drafts that flow from this process will not follow a single or uniform model. They should, however, proceed immediately to the analysis; should limit their use of history, description, current events to no more than is required to illuminate the evidence and the argument; and should in the nonmilitary areas, generally hold themselves

to about 20 pages. Their supporting materials will be confined to separate, or detachable, annexes. These annexes should not be routine and mechanical political, economic, military, sociological sections. They should serve one of three purposes: (i) to present additional, essential background for readers who may be unfamiliar with the subject, (ii) to provide supporting data or materials needed to clarify graphics or more summary treatment in the text, or (iii) to explain in greater detail an argument, an analysis or some alternative projections of developments with lesser probabilities.

7. Each successive draft should be furnished to the Review Panel. Neither you nor I may hear from them on each draft, but I will expect the Panel to keep me advised if the product appears to be moving off track, if special problems emerge, or if my intervention would be useful. I would hope that this will catch any unexpected problems at an early stage and in the end economize the time of the production offices and of my own.

8. The internally-coordinated NFAC draft, complete with an Executive Summary, should be submitted for my approval--and concurrently to the Review Panel for its advice--at least two weeks in advance of any target date for Community coordination.*

9. Finally, I believe good process requires us to try to simplify and streamline interagency coordination. We should seek to minimize word-smithing and minor textual variations. I look to the NIOs to manage this phase--to charm, cajole, persuade, overwhelm, whatever, and to be

* We think there would be advantage in not scheduling NFIB targets until this stage--as a practical means to enforce a two weeks' review period and avoid date recession--but usage may require the notification arrangement suggested in paragraph 5.

prepared to recommend publishing on an "as is" basis with statements of dissent in text or footnotes. We may have to develop some new art form, or title, for papers with real urgency. I went over with you the other day the treatment of dissents or differing views, and I think we reached a meeting of minds on their contribution to the total process.

10. I would be glad to have your comments or take any questions you may have.

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Checklist - Additional Items

1. Is there need to clarify roles, relationships and responsibilities of (a) NIOs, (b) Office Directors and (c) principal drafters in NIE/IIM production?
2. Should the practice be established of detailing drafters/major production office representatives full time to major NIEs/IIMs--or at least for periods required to complete successive stages: first drafts, internally-coordinated NFAC drafts, etc?
3. Should a statement of intelligence gaps or weaknesses, surfaced in the discussion or preparations of papers, be required?
4. Is there a need for an updated, or substantially ^{or} revised, register of consultants/for additional guidelines indicating the form and timing of their use? (Scarcity of their use suggests some diminution of their quality.)
5. Should a special set of accelerated procedures--drafting/review/coordination--be established for SNIEs or urgently requested assessments?

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